

State of California

Department of Education

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 4, 2004

TO: MEMBERS, STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

FROM: Sue Stickel, Deputy Superintendent
Curriculum and Instruction Branch

SUBJECT: High Priority Schools Grant Program (HPSGP): Review of Schools Not Making Significant Growth After 24 Months: Development of State Board of Education Policy

Background

The HPSGP is a voluntary program to provide additional funding to the public schools ranked in the lowest deciles of the Academic Performance Index (API). High-Priority (HP) schools that enter the HPSGP prepare action plans to increase student achievement to at least the schools' target API growth levels.

Education Code Section 52055.650(b) allows the State Board of Education (SBE) to review HP schools that fail to achieve their API growth targets in each of their first two years of implementation. The review is to include an examination of annual reports the schools submit to the California Department of Education (CDE). The State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SSPI), with the approval of the SBE, may direct that the governing board of a school take action and adopt appropriate strategies "to provide corrective assistance to the school in order to achieve the components and benchmarks established in the school's action plan."

In light of these requirements, the SBE needs to address two issues:

- (1) Developing a procedure to review these schools; and
- (2) Determining what actions to take.

Two categories of schools

HP schools that fail to meet API growth targets fall into two categories:

- (1) Schools that achieved some growth, but did not reach their API growth targets (including the targets for sub-groups). These are referred to as "significant growth" schools; and
- (2) Schools that did not grow (and may have in fact declined).

Procedure for SBE review of schools not making growth targets

The statute emphasizes that the SBE's review should utilize information obtained from the annual report that HP schools submit to the CDE. The annual report includes information regarding each school's academic progress, distribution of experienced teachers, use of SBE-adopted and/or SBE-approved instructional materials,

participation in AB 466 and AB 75 professional development, parent involvement, and the number of pupils attending after-school, tutoring, and homework assistance programs.

Procedurally, the SBE will need to determine the type of information it will review regarding these schools and whether the level of this review should be consistent with the level of school performance. For example, for schools in the first category ("significant growth") in both years, the SBE may wish to review only performance data (API). Whereas, for schools in the second category ("no growth") in either of two years, the SBE may wish to receive a summary of the progress of each school's annual report components.

Potential Actions

Of course, the SBE has a full range of options in regard to the actions it authorizes. However, it seems likely the SBE will want to authorize some minimal level of action for all affected schools and authorize more intensive action for schools in the second category ("no growth"). Here is an example:

- All HP schools that fail to meet their API growth targets in each of their first two years of implementation could receive a letter from the SSPI indicating that the local governing board is to hold a public hearing at a regularly scheduled meeting to ensure that members of the school community are aware of the lack of progress. This directive would be consistent with the requirement in *Education Code* Section 52055 for governing boards of schools participating in Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program and whose school has not made growth targets after one year of funding to hold a public hearing.
- Schools that have failed to make any API growth in one or both years could be additionally directed to complete (with the help of the district) an Academic Program Survey (APS), which is part of the School Assistance and Intervention Team process that state monitored schools complete. The APS could then be the subject of a subsequent public hearing held by the local governing board, following which the school could undertake corrective actions and strategies consistent with the APS.